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Steven, Robert

From: Fitzgerald, Tim(OIG)
Sent: Friday, May 24, 2002 10:47 AM
To: OIG-Venezuela
Subject: AMBASSADOR SHAPIRO'S MEETING WITH RODRIGUEZ CHACIN.

FILE COPY

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RELEASED IN PART
B1, 1.4(B), 1.4(D)

Tim Fitzgerald 05/24/2002 10:50:52 AM From DB/Inbox: Tim Fitzgerald

Cable Text
CONFIDENTIAL
TELEGRAM

April 24, 2002

To: SECSTATE WASHDC - ROUTINE
Action: WHA
From: AMEMBASSY CARACAS (CARACAS 1110 - ROUTINE)

TAGS: PGOV, PREL, PINR, SNAR, VE

Captions: None

Subject: AMBASSADOR SHAPIRO'S MEETING WITH RODRIGUEZ CHACIN.

Ref: None

CLASSIFIED BY CHARLES SHAPIRO, AMBASSADOR. REASON 1.5 (B)
AND (D)

1.(U) This cable was drafted on April 8. We are releasing
it now simply for the record.

2.(C) SUMMARY: On April 4, Ambassador Shapiro met with
Minister of the Interior Rodriguez Chacin to get acquainted
and talk about the ministry's role in Venezuela's
government. They discussed the government's view of the
opposition, Venezuela's involvement in Colombia, [REDACTED]

END SUMMARY

3.(U) On April 4, Ambassador Shapiro met with Minister of
the Interior Rodriguez Chacin to get acquainted and talk
about the ministry's role in Venezuelan government. The
conversation began with a talk about Chacin's time in the
United States, where he trained with the marines at
Quantico. He said he was happy to have had the chance to
travel to several parts of the United States during his
year of study, because he believed that travel to other
countries was the best way to learn other governments'
views on geopolitics.

4.(U) The Ambassador asked Chacin about his thoughts on
current political events, and what was in store for the

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF STATE
REVIEW AUTHORITY: JOHN L MILLS
DATE/CASE ID: 04 APR 2006 200304421

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month of April. Chacin seemed to show little concern, and said, "you mean April 19? We'll see." He claimed that the opposition was weak and running out of options, having tried other ways to oust Chavez and failing. He said they had reached their strongest point in February, when a handful of active duty military officers spoke out in favor of Chavez's resignation. Since then, Chacin believes the opposition has been grasping at straws, planning a general strike, then backing off when it didn't feel it had the popular support necessary to make it work. The Ambassador told Chacin that he felt the opposition underestimated the government's strength, just as the government underestimated the opposition's strength.

----- LETTING OFF STEAM -----

5. (U) The Ambassador asked Chacin what role he saw for himself and the Interior Ministry, since he has only held the office for three months. Chacin responded that he saw his personal role as Chavez's advisor when it came to choosing battles with the opposition. He admitted that in the past they have made mistakes: taking on the Catholic Church, for example. Chacin felt it was his job to "smooth out wrinkles" or let the steam out of the pressure cooker when things got too tense. The Ambassador told Chacin that the embassy supported a lowering of tensions, and stressed that the United States did not want to see the political situation turn violent or non-democratic.

----- COLOMBIA -----

6. (U) The Ambassador asked Chacin about rumors that the Venezuelan government was aiding Colombian rebels. Chacin responded that the situation in Colombia was very worrisome for Venezuela. He explained that in Bolivarian ideology, Colombia is not simply a neighboring state, but a "brother state" and Venezuela wants peace. He also said that the problems Colombia is facing are their own problems, not Venezuela's. He said his main concern was protecting Venezuela's borders from spillover, to that end, he has been working and he stressed that it has always been with Colombia's permission to resolve the conflict. He said that involvement beyond that, for example, smuggling arms to the rebels, was counterproductive because it would not lead to peace. Chacin emphasized that he has not in the past nor will he ever be involved in that type of aid to the rebels, and challenged people who claim otherwise to prove it.

COMMUNICATION++++++

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 02 OF 02 CARACAS 001110

SOUTHCOM FOR POLAD, INR FOR INR/B

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E.O. 12958: DECL: 04/08/12

TAGS: PGOV, PREL, PINR, SNAR, VE

SUBJECT: AMBASSADOR SHAPIRO'S MEETING WITH RODRIGUEZ CHACIN.

SHAPIRO

Additional Addressees:

None

CC:

AMEMBASSY BOGOTA
AMEMBASSY LIMA
AMEMBASSY LA PAZ
AMEMBASSY QUITO
AMEMBASSY BRASILIA

Distribution:

TED7188

ACTION WHA-00

INFO	LOG-00	NP-00	ACQ-00	INL-00	DEAE-00	DINT-00	DODE-00
	DOEE-00	DOTE-00	PERC-00	SRPP-00	DS-00	EB-00	OIGO-00
	FAAE-00	FBIE-00	VC-00	H-01	TEDE-00	INR-00	JUSE-00
	LAB-01	L-00	VCE-00	AC-01	NSAE-00	OMB-01	OPIC-01
	PA-00	PM-00	PRS-00	ACE-00	P-00	SP-00	IRM-00
	TRSE-00	USIE-00	PMB-00	DSCC-00	DRL-02	G-00	NFAT-00
	SAS-00	/007W					

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R 241707Z APR 02
FM AMEMBASSY CARACAS
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5592
INFO CIA WASHDC
DIA WASHDC
NSC WASHDC
USCINCSO MIAMI FL
AMEMBASSY BOGOTA
AMEMBASSY LIMA
AMEMBASSY LA PAZ
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C O N F I D E N T I A L CARACAS 001110

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End Cable Text

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